DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 271 769 CS 209 894

AUTHOR Hesterman, Vicki
TITLE Consumer Magazines and Ethical Standards: A Preliminary Study of 100 American Magazines.
PUB DATE Aug 86
NOTE 32p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (69th, Norman, OK, August 3-6, 1986).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Codes of Ethics; *Editors; *Ethics; *Integrity; Journalism; *Media Research; Moral Values; *Periodicals
IDENTIFIERS Editorial Policy

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to determine what, if any, are the ethical guidelines standard for persons working in the magazine industry. A two-page questionnaire, consisting of 21 questions, was mailed to the contact editors of 100 of the nation's most popular consumer magazines. Responses were received from 49 of the editors. The data revealed that magazine journalists disagree significantly on how they would handle specific ethical dilemmas. Some editors embrace practices considered totally unacceptable to others. The results suggest that it is the reader who suffers when journalists lack integrity. A copy of the questionnaire is appended. (DF)

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CONSUMER MAGAZINES AND ETHICAL STANDARDS:

A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF 100 AMERICAN MAGAZINES

by Vicki Hesterman
E.W. Scripps School of Journalism
Ohio University

1986

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Presented to the Magazine Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication National Convention, the University of Oklahoma, August 1986

CS209894

CONSUMER MAGAZINES AND ETHICAL STANDARDS: A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF 100 AMERICAN MAGAZINES

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E.W. Scripps School of Journalism
Ohio University

Americans read an average of 11.6 magazines per month. This exposure has a profound effect on individuals and society, yet little research has been done into ethical standards of magazines.

As this pilot study of 100 major American consumer magazines shows, some magazines demand strict separation of editorial and advertising interests; others allow collaboration. Some allow free trips and tickets, while others have rigid "no-freebies" policies. The ethical issue becomes even more serious when it concerns the autonomy of the editorial office. Half of those editors who responded to the study conducted in October of 1985 said they felt pressure from the advertising or business offices.

In this study, editors were surveyed via mail questionnaires; 49 responded. Six potential problem areas were considered: 1) Autonomy of editorial staffs from advertising staffs; 2) Set-up photographs and composite characters; 3) Gifts, favors and free travel; 4) Outside activities of staff; 5) Entering contests; 6) Acceptable means for getting a story.

Answers indicate a considerable lack of standard practices and few ethical guidelines. More research is needed and planned, but this preliminary study indicates that more clearly delineated editorial expectations, perhaps even written codes, are needed to guide practices within the magazine industry.

Presented to the Magazine Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, 1986

University of Oklahoma

Summer, 1986

for presentation to
AEJMC Magazine Division
University of Oklahoma

CONSUMER MAGAZINES AND ETHICAL GUIDELINES: A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF 100 AMERICAN MAGAZINES

by Vicki Hesterman, Ohio University

"Is this some kind of a joke?" asked an editor of one of America's major consumer magazines. Assured that the survey on ethical standards was no joke, he continued, "So what do we do, throw all these tickets and things away? It's just understood that there are certain perks we get as compensation for the low pay."

The phone call from the offended editor, who shall remain nameless, came a week after 100 questionnaires were mailed to America's largest consumer magazines. The survey was designed to determine ethical standards within the magazine industry. Results provided some fascinating insight into magazine practices.

Ethical guidelines within the communication industry vary from rigidly written policies to informal--and often ignored--standards. Although newspaper and broadcasting practices have been carefully scrutinized in recent years by such organizations as the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the Associated Press Managing Editors, and the Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi, the magazine industry has not been subjected to such careful scrutiny.

RELATED LITERATURE

While studies show that most newspaper and broadcast journalists are increasingly sensitive to public opinion and careful to avoid even the appearance of impropriety, little research has been done to determine whether magazine journalists are similarly inclined. A look at popular educational books for magazine writers provided little insight into ethical considerations; even the American Society of Journalists and Authors Code of Ethics and Fair Practice lists only one point of any help to writers seekings guidelines, and that merely suggests that writers be accurate and honest. Nothing is said about the acceptance of free trips or tickets, conflict of interest, misrepresentation, or separation of editorial and business interests. (1)

Little academic research has been done on this subject, despite its importance. A search of the journals proved virtually fruitless. Yet, given the far-reaching potential impact magazines have, this topic is one that needs to be studied.

Magazines have had a great impact on American society during the past two centuries. Theodore Peterson, in his book Magazines in the 20th Century, said that lifelong exposure to magazines has to have a profound effect on individuals and on society. Peterson concluded that although American magazines have their faults, they have contributed much to life and culture. Magazines help with political and social reform, interpret issues and events, foster a sense of national community, provide a low-cost form of entertainment, instruct in daily living, educate about man's cultural heritage,

and offer a variety of entertainment, information and ideas, according to Peterson. "Magazines have become part of people's lives," he said. (2)

Thousands of magazines are published annually in the United States. Statistics vary; Ayres Directory listed 11,946 in 1985, American Magazines for the 1980's counted 10,665 in 1982, and other sources showed figures up to 22,000. At any rate, if the Magazine Publisher's Association estimate that 94 percent of Americans read 11.6 magazines per month is accurate, people in the U.S.A. depend on magazines for much of their information.

Clifford Christians, in his book Media Ethics -- Cases and Moral Reasoning, agreed that magazines have great impact on society: "Newspapers, magazines, radio and television together form a paramount social institution so deeply imbedded we label our present era 'the information age'." He added that media professionals who are serious about their work will take the time and trouble to help build a socially responsible communication system. (3)

People read magazines for numerous reasons. Magazine readers reported improving their lifestyle as the most important reason for reading, and getting information to pass on to others as the second most important reason, according to a study by Wayne Towers and Barbara Hartung at San Diego State University. While the study showed that magazines serve a far different purpose than do newspapers, readers are still dependent on the integrity of the writers and the accuracy of the articles. (4)

Various writers and editors involved in the magazine industry have expressed concern about ethical issues. Discussion at a

1984 American Society of Magazine Editors seminar indicated significant differences in what magazines consider to be acceptable behavior. John Mack Carter, executive editor of Good Housekeeping magazine, chaired the session and commented that few magazines have written policies addressing ethical questions. He added that most magazines are more likely to have an understood policy rather than a formal code, although many business and investment magazines are adopting written ethics policies after a recent scandal at the Wall Street Journal involving a journalist who used private information for personal gain. (5)

Carter later commented in a telephone interview that consumer magazine editorial staffs were often faced with pressure from the business and advertising offices. (6) Other editors agreed with Carter's observation, as this study found.

Potential ethical dilemmas magazines can face vary from accepting free trips to allowing advertisers to "buy" a story. The Associated Press Managing Editors code warns that newspaper journalists should avoid even the appearance of wrongdoing; it's not enough that a writer or editor remain objective after taking a freebie or accepting a big ad in exchange for a feature. What matters more is how the situation looks to the public. Whether the public trusts the media, be it newspaper or magazine, depends on how accurate the information is, and how the journalist obtained it. It would seem that whether a writer is a newspaper or magazine journalist, he or she would strive to avoid any appearance

of unethical behavior.

Byte, a computer magazine, printed an editorial by Phil Lemmons in 1984 calling for ethical standards for personal computer magazines:

> As a reader and a consumer, you have the right to know whether you can rely on the honesty and objectivity of articles in this and other personal computer magazines. Some common but unpublicized practices within this field raise serious ethical issues and can compromise a magazine's integrity. We want to inform you of these practices and to state our policies on them. (7)

Lemmons, editor-in-chief of Byte, wrote that computer manufacturers often offers editors up to 50 percent discounts on computers. He added that Byte occasionally receives invitations to send editors on expenses-paid trips all over the world. (8)

Freelancers who submit pieces about computers and software sometimes work for those companies and are paid by them. At some magazines, the advertising department or business office at times determines what an issue will cover. Lemmons said these practices, although common at other publications, are forbidden at Byte. He called for other magazines to also maintain high standards.

Another touchy area has been the separation of advertisers from editorial writers. In a candid article in the July 1981 issue of Car and Driver, Gordon Baxter described an encounter with the vice-president of marketing of Tuff-Kote Dinol, Inc.

The man offered to buy a story. Baxter was so incensed that he wrote an expose about the incident, in which he stated that those who wrote about the auto industry "live in such daily anxiety that...the editorial types do not even drink with the people in the advertising side of the house lest someone say 'Aha'." (9)

Six years ago, the Federal Trade Commission investigated charges that some shoe manufacturers--including Brooks--bought high ratings in the Runner's World annual footwear ratings issue. Brooks co-sponsored a series of races with Runner's World publisher John Anderson. Although no wrongdoing was discovered, the possibility that Brooks bought good ratings was left in the minds of readers and runners. (10)

Still another ethical dilemma concerns the use of composite characters. The famous case of "Jimmy's World," the Pulitzer winning fictionalized account of an eight-year-old heroin addict written by Janet Cooke for the Washington Post, has been mentioned in nearly every article on ethics since it happened in 1981. Some writers blamed Cooke, some blamed the Post, and some blamed the Pulitzer Prize itself for creating the pressure to perform. The same situation could also occur at a magazine.

Writing about the Cooke case in the U.S. News and World Report, author James Michener said Cooke was so bright that she progressed to the top of her profession quickly, without learning its great traditions:

> The traditional news reporter begins slowly under some cantankerous editor with high professional and grammatical

> ideals. One...learns painfully to distinguish between truth and fiction...one watches what happens when either blind ambition or excessive drinking destroys a promising talent...Always there is a steady accumulation of standards: 'I do not betray confidences.' 'I refuse to touch that kind of a story...I must have two confirmations of a statement like that....' She had not paid her dues, and in a moment of crisis she was left without self-protection. (11)

Some magazines use composite characters and fictional situations in articles to make a point. Yet the same technique caused a great scandal in a newspaper. Michener's point was that Cooke simply did not understand the rules; she was too young and inexperienced at 26 to realize how to play the game. Perhaps it was this lack of knowledge rather than blind ambition that caused her downfall. Perhaps a young woman who grew up reading magazine articles which made liberal use of fictional examples and composite characters did not really understand the seriousness of her error. Even if this was not true for Cooke, other young journalists may make mistakes because they do not know the accepted ethical standards.

Travel writing is still another area where ethical standards seem lax. The April 4, 1984 issue of USA Today featured an article on travel writing. Many airlines and hotels sponsor travel junkets, free room and board, and first-class treatment to travel writers. Although when questioned, many travel writers claim they can still write objective pieces, it is a challenge to find many critical comments in "freebie" articles.

Even though the Society of American Travel Writers drew up its own code of ethics, absolutists wouldn't find it particularly ethical. The code accepts the fact that some travel writers write in order to travel free. (12)

In The Complete Guide to Writing Nonfiction, Robert Scott Milne took issue with the position newspapers have taken on free trips. He said that the same newspapers that reject press junkets as unethical will accept free tickets to theater and sports events.

Milne added that writers have an ethical commitment to write and try to sell an article after accepting a free trip. He wrote that the writer has a greater ethical commitment to the reader to be objective and honest about the place. Quoting Richard Dunlop, travel book author and past president of the Society of American Travel Writers as saying, "I have always felt free to write exactly what I thought of the areas I visited on press trips, " Milne defended free trips. (13)

Magazine writing textbooks and guides were found to include very little about ethics. In Magazine Article Writing, Substance and Style by Betsy Graham, ethics were not mentioned in the popular college textbook's 226 pages. (14) Another widely-used book, Magazine Writing: The Inside Angle by Art Spikol, did mention ethics, although briefly. Spikol wrote that journalism has no standard code of behavior; it has an unwritten one of sorts, guided mainly by libel laws. He added that journalists need to be their own watchdogs. (15)

All these problems and opinions only add to the confusion

surrounding the question of what, if any, are the ethical guidelines standard to those working with the magazine industry.

METHODOLOGY

A two-page questionnaire, consisting of 21 questions, was mailed to the contact editor (as named in Writer's Market or the magazine staff box) of 100 of the nation's most popular consumer magazines. Selections were made according to combined circulation counts from lists from the Magazine Publishers Association and the Folio 400. In an attempt to survey primarily fairly broad interest consumer magazines, newsmagazines, Sunday newspaper supplement magazines, and highly specialized magazines were excluded this time. Average circulation of those surveyed ranged between 750,000 and two million; the largest magazine responding reported a circulation of 17 million. All magazines were promised anonymity and are in no way identified in this paper unless they gave specific permission on the response sheet.

Because this was a pilot study intended to sample a wide variety of major consumer magazines to determine the overall state of ethical affairs, results are not presented according to specific types of magazines. Future studies will do so.

The survey was derived from one entitled "Issues of Journalistic Ethics," by Dr. Ralph Izard of Ohio University. Designed to provide bases for comparison with past ethical guidelines and to emphasize current journalistic dilemmas, the 1983 survey included some questions

from a 1974 Associated Press Managing Editors Association Survey. The 1983 respondents were primarily newspaper and broadcast journalists. (16)

For purposes of this study, questions were changed or added with the magazine industry in mind. Questions were designed to investigate policies in six areas: (1) To what extent do magazine staffs have freedom from pressure from advertising staffs to choose and present editorial material? (2) When are set-up photographs and composite or fictional characters acceptable in magazine articles? (3) What are policies on gifts, favors and free travel? (4) What outside activities are allowed for the editorial staff? (5) Can employees enter journalistic contests? (6) What are considered acceptable information-gathering procedures?

Space was provided for comments, and editors were encouraged to write additional comments. Many did. Respondents could remain anonymous, and most did. The initial letter and survey form were followed six weeks later by a reminder postcard.

Forty-nine editors responded. Results were tabulated and are presented by percentage.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Responses were received from 49 of the 100 magazines surveyed. Results are presented in percentage of respondents who answered each individual question, presented in the tables as "n."

Responding were editors, editors in chief, managing editors,

executive editors, several publishers, editorial directors, associate editors, articles editors, and senior editors. All respondents held high positions. Consumer magazines classified themselves as general, men's, women's, specialized consumer, or "other," which included inspirational, business, public TV, regional and veterans.

When asked if the editorial staff had complete autonomy from the business office/advertising staff, 48.9 percent said yes. Another 48.9 percent said some pressure was felt, and 2.2 percent felt considerable pressure. (Table 1)

Only 4.3 percent said that the publisher allows the practice of giving favorable coverage to advertisers in exchange for purchasing ads; 78.3 percent said the practice was not allowed, and 17.4 percent said it was entirely the editor's decision. (Table 2)

If a good story was submitted detailing the dangers of products advertised in their magazine, 54.8 of the editors would consult the business office before buying it. More than 20 percent (21.4) would buy the story without communicating with the business side at all. A frequent written comment added to this question was that the editor would buy the story, but advise or warn the business office that it would appear; 23.8 percent of the editors responded they would give a warning. (Table 3)

Most editors (95.7 percent) said they would never promise favorable publicity in exchange for an interview and/or photo. Sometimes promising such publicity were 4.3 percent. (Table 4)

All gifts and favors were ruled out by 10.6 percent while 59.6 percent ruled out all but token gifts. Gifts were not ruled out at 29.8 percent of the magazines.

The earlier SPJ study showed that 26.3 percent of surveyed members of SPJ, SDX, APME and RTNDA (Radio-Television News Directors Association) ruled out all gifts. 58.3 percent ruled out all but token gifts, and 15.2 percent allowed gifts.

Thus, nearly 15 percent more magazine respondents allowed the acceptance of gifts. Apparently, more newspaper and broadcast journalists are reluctant to accept "freebies." (Table 5)

A staff person having gifts sent home would be fired by 31.1 percent of the editors surveyed, while 11.1 percent would not fire such a person. If the behavior was sneaky or continued, the employee would be fired by 24.5 percent, and 33.3 percent said that it depends.

Of the newspaper and broadcast personnel surveyed, 25 percent would discharge the employee; five percent would not; 22 percent said it depends, and 41 percent would discharge the employee if the behavior was sneaky or continued. (Table 6)

Magazine editors allow the acceptance of free tickets to theater or movies for the reviewer only in five percent of the cases. Another 72.5 percent accept the tickets but do not promise a review, and 22.5 percent accept no tickets.

In comparison, the SPJ study showed 36 percent accept for the reviewer only, 31 percent accept but do not promise a review, and 30 percent do not accept tickets. (Table 7)

Ten percent of the magazine editors accept complimentary tickets for sports events, for sports staffers to attend or cover events; 16.7 percent accept to cover only. Another 26.7 percent accept for anyone on the staff to attend, and 46.6 accept no free tickets.

Only 17 percent of the SPJ respondents refuse free sports tickets. Thirty-five percent accept for sports or general staff to attend, and 46 percent accept to cover only. It appears that magazine journalists are less likely to accept free sports tickets than are newspaper and broadcast journalists. A number of editors commented that sports events were not really relevant to their magazines. (Table 8)

Only five percent of the magazine editors accept no free tickets to parks, museums, special events or educational places, while 68 percent accept the tickets without promising an article. Another 27 percent will accept the tickets and promise a story. (Table 9)

While 60.4 percent have a stated policy about accepting free gifts and travel, 39.6 percent have no policy. The SPJ study showed that 74 percent of the respondents have a stated policy. (Table 10)

On the matter of free trips, 66.6 percent of the editors will allow employees to accept free trips, but no story is promised, while 16.7 would accept a trip regardless of the circumstances. Only 16.7 percent would not accept free trips.

The SPJ study showed that 39.2 percent would not accept free trips, 14.5 percent would accept a trip, and 45.5 percent

said it depends. Thus, 20 percent more magazine personnel would accept free trips under any circumstances than would other media journalists. (Table 11)

Sixty-six percent of the editors reject stories from freelancers who have accepted a free trip on the agreement they will market the resulting story, while 23.4 percent will knowingly accept such stories, if well-written. Another 10.6 percent will accept if the story mentions who paid for the trip. (Table 12)

A stated policy regarding free trips, gifts and favors exists at 25.5 percent of the magazines surveyed, while 74.5 percent have no such policy. (Table 13)

Set-up photographs are allowed at 36.8 percent of the magazines. 5.3 percent allow them for cover shots only; 7.9 percent allow them to recreate something that actually happened, and 50 percent only use actual photographs or real situations. (Table 14)

Labeling composite characters or fictitious situations is always done at 72.8 percent of the magazines surveyed. Three percent label, but not until the end, and 24.2 percent do not label at all. (Table 15)

Staff members are allowed to hold public offices at 85.7 percent of the magazines. They are not allowed to serve at 2.9 percent, appointive only at 5.7 percent and discouraged but allowed at 5.7 percent.

The SPJ survey showed that only 12.9 percent are allowed

to hold public office, 57 percent are not allowed, and seven percent are allowed to hold appointive offices only. Twenty percent are discouraged but allowed to hold office. (Table 16)

Staff members are not allowed to freelance work elsewhere at 14.9 percent of the magazines, while 63.8 percent allow freelancing to noncompetitors. Another 4.3 percent allow it occasionally, 14.9 percent allow it with a limit, and 2.1 percent allow unlimited freelancing.

Ten percent of the SPJ respondents prohibit any freelancing, while 46 percent allow it with noncompetitors. Three percent allow it occasionally, 29 percent allow it with a limit, and seven percent allow unlimited freelancing. (Table 17)

Entering contests sponsored by non-journalistic corporations of interest groups was encouraged at 23.5 percent of the magazines. Another 55.9 percent permitted it, 14.7 percent discouraged it, and 5.9 percent prohibited it.

Newspaper and broadcast managers reported that 12 percent are encouraged to enter, 54 percent are allowed, 20 percent are discouraged and 10 percent are prohibited. (Table 18)

Employees are allowed to accept prizes of value in such contests at 30.2 percent of the magazines. Seven percent discouraged or prohibited prizes, and 62.8 percent had no policy.

The SPJ survey showed that 42 percent could accept prizes, 35 percent prohibited or discouraged acceptance, and 20 percent

had no policy. (Table 19)

Nearly half the magazine editors surveyed, 45.2 percent said they would use a non-news personal feature or photo about a prominent person without permission, while 42.9 percent said they would not use such material. Another 11.9 percent would if time limitations prevented getting approval. (Table 20)

Misrepresentation by writers or photographers in order to get an important story or photo is not allowed by 88.9 percent of the editors. 8.9 percent allow the practice if it is explained in the article, and 2.2 percent allow the practice without explanation. (Table 21)

DISCUSSION

Results of the survey indicate primarily that much more research is needed. Magazine editors appear to disagree on significant issues such as the acceptance of free trips and tickets, consulting with the business office before purchasing certain stories, ruling out gifts and favors, adopting formal guidelines, and using set-up photographs or composite characters.

John Mack Carter, editor of Good Housekeeping magazine, commented that the lack of separation between editorial and advertising interests on many magazines concerns him. Joseph Provey, editor of Home Mechanix, wrote, "Ethics is a big problem with consumer magazines. Good survey."

While many editors offered verbal or written support, some

were defensive. One offended editor phoned, saying his staff thought the survey indicated that total graft was going on within the magazine industry. He asked if the questionnaire was some type of joke, and added that because of low pay, magazine personnel have a right to accept such perks as free tickets, gifts and trips.

Survey results reflect this diversity of opinion on the part of magazine editors. The comparison with the earlier SPJ study shows that newspaper and broadcast journalists have come to more of a consensus of opinion of practices than have magazine journalists. More newspaper and broadcast stations than magazines have adopted formal policies regarding acceptable standards.

Slightly more than half the editors responding reported they felt some or considerable pressure from the advertising office to cover advertised products. This is a significant response, one which concerns many editors.

The fact that 55 percent of all editors consult the business office before buying a story, while an additional 24 percent warn or advise the business or advertising office also indicates potential conflict of interest.

CONCLUSION

Magazine journalists disagree significantly on how they would handle specific ethical dilemmas. Some editors embrace practices considered totally unacceptable to others. Some strive to uphold the lofty ideals found in newspaper and broadcasting codes of ethics. In the long run, it is the reader who

loses when no one watches the watchdog. The ongoing attempts of journalists to increase credibility with the public depends on gaining public trust.

Although some scholars, including Jay Black and Ralph Barney, say that ethical codes are unnecessary and may even lead to unethical behavior, (17) Goodwin, Izard and others support the theory that beginning and freelance writers in particular need to know in clearly stated terms what traditional journalists consider ethical information-gathering procedures. (18)

> Hodding Carter III, in the foreword to Media Ethics, wrote: It is time that the ethical vacuum that lies at the heart of most media institutions be filled with something better than situation ethics or a value-free approach that substitutes a hazy concept of the general welfare for a more rigorous moral accountability. To put the matter in plain language, the domain of the mass media today is an ethical jungle in which pragmatism is king, agreed principles as to daily practice are few...What the public senses is the reality that there are no articulated guidelines, no ethical philosophy worthy of the name that undergirds the way the media work. (19)

The whole issue of ethical codes is a complicated one. Situationists argue that formal codes infringe on a journalist's professionalism and right to make a decision based on each situation. Absolutists would counter that codes are needed

to abolish ethical errors, give neophyte journalists guidelines, and present the public with fair and accurate information.

Goodwin wrote that the folklore of journalism in America teaches unethical as well as ethical practices. He added, "Younger journalists need to know in clearly stated terms what their news organizations and journalism in general regard as ethical and unethical." He concluded that "tough, clear, written standards" would be a step towards the goal of more standard practices. (20)

This survey indicates that consumer magazine journalists disagree about nearly every area of ethical consideration. Some take free trips, some take free tickets, some allow composite characters, some experience editorial-advertising collaboration. Considering the fact that consumer magazines comprise a mere fraction of the magazine industry, which includes trade magazines, business magazines, city and regional magazines, special interest magazines and others, arriving at any kind of a common code will probably not be a simple process.

The Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi and the ASNE are only two of many journalistic societies that attempt to raise consciousness by composing idealistic ethical codes. Journalists tend to be quite opinionated as to how much value these codes really have. Some say they are demeaning; others hold that they are necessary and helpful.

Rigidly written and enforced codes can create problems as troublesome as the ethical dilemmas themselves, yet unspoken policies are easily violated, sometimes innocently. Solutions may include instituting more college ethics classes, plenty of

formal ethical discussions in the workplace (for example, at special staff meetings), seminars devoted to ethical dilemmas and establishing standards, or more clearly delineated editorial expectations. The call for more standard editorial guidelines cannot be ignored, and more comprehensive studies of magazine practices would be a logical step towards answering this call.

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APPENDIX A

Journalistic Ethics

Pilot study sent to 100 largest consumer magazines

This survey is sponsored by Vicki Hesterman at the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University. It represents an effort to enhance the understanding of journalistic standards and practices within the magazine industry. Your opinion and knowledge are important in this effort. Because I am trying to complete my study as soon as possible, I would appreciate it if you could take 5 minutes now and fill out the questionnaire. A self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed. The survey is entirely anonymous, unless you choose to include your name and magazine. I would welcome comments, either now or later.

PLEASE CIRCLE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE — COMMENTS

1. Does your editorial staff have complete autonomy when it comes to choosing the content and slant of your editorial copy, or does the business office/advertising staff exert pressure to cover or not cover certain subjects?

   1. Complete autonomy
   2. Some pressure felt, but we make final decision
   3. Considerable pressure felt which influences decision

2. Does your publisher allow the practice of giving favorable coverage to advertisers in exchange for purchasing advertising?

   1. No
   2. Yes
   3. Leaves it entirely to editors

3. If a writer submits a well-written, documented story detailing the dangers of a certain product or potential problems with something advertised in your publication, would you:

   1. Immediately reject the story
   2. Consider it but consult business office
   3. Buy and print it without consulting business office

4. Does your editorial staff ever promise favorable publicity in exchange for an interview and/or photo?

   1. Never
   2. Frequently
   3. Sometimes

5. Do you rule out all gifts for your editorial staff?

   1. Yes
   2. Yes, except for token gifts (little or no cash value)
   3. No

6. If you should discover that any staff member is having gifts from sources sent home, would this be grounds for discharge?

   1. Yes
   2. No
   3. Yes, if sneaking
   4. Yes, if continued
   5. Depends

7. What is your magazine's general policy towards acceptance of free tickets to theaters, movies, etc.?

   1. Accept for reviewer only
   2. Accept, but don't promise review
   3. Don't accept

8. Does your magazine accept complimentary tickets to college and professional sports events?

   1. Accept to cover only
   2. Accept for sports staff to attend or cover
   3. Accept for general staff to attend
   4. Don't accept; pay for any tickets

9. Does your magazine accept free admission to parks, museums, special events, or information or educational places?

   1. Accept but don't promise article
   2. Accept to cover only
   3. Don't accept

10. Do you have a stated policy for all staffers on the acceptance of gifts, favors and free travel?

    1. Yes
    2. No

11. Will members of your editorial staff, under any circumstances, accept a free trip?

    1. Yes
    2. No
    3. Yes, but no story is promised

12. Do you knowingly accept freelance stories from writers or photographers who have accepted a free trip on the agreement they will market the resulting story?

    1. Yes
    2. No
    3. Yes, if the story mentions who paid for the trip

13. Do you have a stated policy for freelance writers and photographers regarding gifts, favors and free travel?

    1. Yes
    2. No

14. Do you ever publish photographs that are set up without labeling them as photo illustrations? (Excluding portraits, fashion, food shots)

    1. Yes
    2. Yes, but only to recreate a scene that actually happened
    3. Yes, but cover shots only
    4. No, we only use actual shots of real action/situations

15. Do you have a policy to always label (in nonfiction articles) composite characters and fictitious situations or characters?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Yes, but not until end of article

16. Do you permit staff members to hold public office, either elective or appointive?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Appointive only
4. Discouraged but allowed

17. Do you permit your staff to freelance stories and pictures elsewhere?

1. No
2. Yes, noncompetitors only
3. Occasionally
4. Yes, with a limit
5. Yes, no limit

18. Is your staff permitted or encouraged to enter contests sponsored by corporations or interest groups (non-journalistic)?

1. Encouraged to enter
2. Permitted but not encouraged
3. Discouraged
4. Prohibited

19. What is your policy on staff members' acceptance of cash awards or prizes of value in contests sponsored by non-journalistic corporations or interest groups?

1. Permit acceptance
2. Discourage or prohibit acceptance
3. No policy

20. Will you publish a non-news personal feature or photo about prominent persons without their permission?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Yes, if story is good and time factor prevents getting approval

21 Do you ever allow a writer or photographer to pose as someone else to get an important story and/or photograph?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Yes, if explained in article
4. Yes, if subject told before publication
5. Both 3 & 4

22. Your title:

1. Editor
2. Editor-in-chief
3. Managing editor
4. Other:_____

23. Type of magazine:

1. General consumer
2. Women's (consumer)
3. Men's (consumer)
4. Specialized consumer (hobby or interest group)
5. Other_____

24. Approximate circulation (newstand and subscription):

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION. IF YOU WOULD LIKE A COPY OF THE RESULTS INDICATE ON THIS FORM, OR SEND ME A SEPARATE LETTER AND REQUEST ONE.

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS OPTIONAL.

Magazine name:_____

Your name:_____

Publisher:_____

Again, thank you. Best wishes. Vicki Hesterman

Vicki Hesterman
E.W. Scripps School of Journalism
Ohio University
Athens, Ohio 45701

OTHER COMMENTS:

Vicki Hesterman

TABLE 1

Does your editorial staff have complete autonomy when it comes to choosing the content and slant of editorial copy, or does the business office/advertising staff exert pressure to cover or not cover certain subjects?

	MAGS
Complete autonomy, editors decide	48.9
Some pressure, but editors decide	48.9
Considerable pressure, influences decision	2.2

N=49 (MAGS)

TABLE 2

Does your publisher allow the practice of giving favorable coverage to advertisers in exchange for purchasing ads?

	MAGS
No	78.3
Yes	4.3
Leaves it to editors	17.4

N=46 (MAGS)

TABLE 3

If a writer submits a well-written story detailing dangers of a certain product advertised in your publication, would you:

	MAGS
Immediately reject story	0
Consider it, consult business office	54.8
Print without consulting business office	21.4
Buy it and warn or advise business office	23.8

N=42 (MAGS)

TABLE 4

Does your editorial staff ever promise favorable publicity in exchange for an interview and/or photo?

	MAGS
Never	95.7
Frequently	0
Sometimes	4.3

N=47 (MAGS)

TABLE 5

Do you rule out all gifts for your editorial staff?

	MAGS	SPJ
Yes	10.6	26.3
Yes, except token gifts	59.6	58.3
No	29.8	15.2
Other or no answer		

N=47 (MAGS) N=1027 (SPJ)

TABLE 6

Should you discover a staff member is having gifts from sources sent home, would this be grounds for discharge?

	MAGS	SPJ
Yes	31.1	25.7
No	11.1	5.4
Yes, if sneaking	6.7	11.3
Yes, if continued	17.8	29.9
Depends	33.3	22.3
Other or no answer		5.4

N=45 (MAGS) N=1027 (SPJ)

TABLE 7

What is your magazine's general policy toward's acceptance of free tickets to theaters, movies, etc.?

	MAGS	SPJ
Accept for reviewer only	5.0	36.4
Accept but do not promise review	72.5	30.7
Do not accept	22.5	29.5
Other or no answer		3.4

N=40 (MAGS) N=1027 (SPJ)

TABLE 8

Does your magazine accept complimentary tickets to college and professional sports events?

	MAGS	SPJ
Accept to cover only	16.7	46.1
Accept for sports staff to cover or attend	10.0	21.6
Accept for general staff to attend	26.7	13.1
Don't accept; pay for tickets	46.6	16.9
Other or no answer		2.3

N=30 (MAGS) N=1027 (SPJ)

TABLE 9

Does your magazine accept free admission to parks, museums, special events, or information or educational places?

	MAGS
Accept but don't promise article	68.3
Accept to cover only	26.8
Do not accept	4.9

N=41 (MAGS)

TABLE 10

Do you have a stated policy for all staffers on the acceptance of gifts, favors and free travel?

	MAGS	SPJ
Yes	60.4	74.3
No	39.6	25.2
No answer		.5

N=48 (MAGS) N=1027 (SPJ)

TABLE 11

Will members of your editorial staff, under any circumstances, accept a free trip?

	MAGS	SPJ
Yes	16.7	14.5
No	16.7	39.2
Yes, but no story is promised	66.6	
Depends		45.5
Other or no answer		.8

N=48 (MAGS) N=1027 (SPJ)

TABLE 12

Do you knowingly accept freelance stories from writers or photographers who have accepted a free trip on the agreement they will market the resulting story?

	MAGS
Yes	23.4
No	66.0
	10.6

N=47

TABLE 13

Do you have a stated policy for freelance writers and photographers regarding gifts, favors and free travel?

	MAGS
Yes	25.5
No	74.5

N=47

TABLE 14

Do you ever publish photographs that are set up without labeling them as photo illustrations?

	MAGS
Yes	36.8
Yes, but only to recreate an actual scene	7.9
Yes, but cover shots only	5.3
No, we only use actual shots	50.0

N= 38

TABLE 15

Do you have a policy to always label (in nonfiction articles) composite characters and fictitious situations or characters?

	MAGS
Yes	72.8
No	24.2
Yes, but not until end of article	3.0

N= 33

TABLE 16

Do you permit staff members to hold public office?

	MAGS	SPJ
Yes	85.7	12.9
No	2.9	56.5
Appointive only	5.7	7.4
Discouraged but allowed	5.7	20.3
Other or no answer		2.9

N=35 (MAGS) N=1027 (SPJ)

TABLE 17

Do you permit your staff to freelance stories/pictures elsewhere?

	MAGS	SPJ
No	14.9	9.6
Yes, noncompetitors	63.8	45.7
Occasionally	4.3	3.0
Yes, with a limit	14.9	29.0
Yes, no limit	2.1	7.2
Other or no answer		5.5

N=47 (MAGS) N=1027 (SPJ)

TABLE 18

Is your staff permitted or encouraged to enter contests sponsored by corporations or interst groups (non-journalistic)?

	MAGS	SPJ
Encouraged	23.5	12.2
Permitted, not encouraged	55.9	54.2
Discouraged	14.7	20.4
Prohibited	5.9	9.9
Other or no answer		3.3

N=34 (MAGS) N=1027 (SPJ)

TABLE 19

What is your policy on staff members' acceptance of cash awards or prizes of value in contests sponsored by non-journalistic corporations or interest groups?

	MAGS	SPJ
Permit acceptance	30.2	41.6
Discourage or prohibit	7.0	34.8
No policy	62.8	20.4
Other or no answer		2.2

N=43 (MAGS) N=1027 (SPJ)

TABLE 20

Will you publish a non-news personal feature or photo about prominent persons without their permission?

	MAGS
Yes	45.2
No	42.9
Yes, if timeliness a factor	11.9

N= 42

TABLE 21

Do you ever allow a writer and/or photographer to pose as someone else to get an important story and/or photograph?

	MAGS
Yes	2.2
No	88.9
Yes, if explained if article	8.9

N=45